

Meeting Minutes of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction

6 May 2004, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., White House Conference Center, Eisenhower Room

Names of absent members are indicated in italics. Members participating via telephone are indicated with a "T."

Officers

Helen Wood (NOAA), Chair
John Filson (USGS), Vice-Chair for Science
Margaret Lawless (FEMA), Vice-Chair for Policy

NSTC Liaison

Gene Whitney (OSTP)

Working Group Chairs

International Working Group

Larry Roeder (State), Co-Chair
Fernando Echavarria (State), Co-Chair
Larry Weber (NSF), Co-Chair

Earth Observation Task Group

Rosalind Helz (USGS), Chair

Grand Challenges Task Group

Priscilla Nelson (NSF), Co-Chair
Noel Raufaste (NIST), Co-Chair

Remote Sensing Applications Working Group

Rosalind Helz (USGS), Co-Chair
Steve Ambrose (NASA), Co-Chair

Designated Representatives

CDC Josephine Malilay (T)

DHS *Nancy Suski*

Chris Doyle

DHS/FEMA *Anthony Lowe*

Priscilla Scruggs

DHS/USCG Russ Doughty

DOD *Earnest Paylor*

Bob Feden

DOE *Tom Ryder*

DOI Lawrence Braun

DOI / USGS David Applegate

EOP / OSTP Gene Whitney

EPA *Peter Jutro*

Regan Murray

HUD *John Kennedy*

Kevin Sheehan

NASA Steve Ambrose

NGA *Monica Gaughan*

NGB Peter Aylward

NIST Jim St. Pierre

NOAA *Helen Wood*

NSF Priscilla Nelson

OMB *Erin McCartney, Gary Reisner,*
& Jason Freihage

OPHS John Babb

State Fernando Echavarria &
Larry Roeder, Jr.

USACE *Michael O'Connor*

David Mathis

USAID Peter Morris

USDA *Allen Dedrick*

USDA / USFS *Susan Conard*

Other Attendees

NIST

Noel Raufaste

NOAA

John Gaynor

Nathalie Valette-Silver (T)

NSF

Bob O'Connor

Larry Weber

Secretariat

Dori Akerman

Agenda

10:00 Welcome and Introductions
10:05 Approval of Meeting Minutes
10:10 Report from the Chair
10:20 Report from the OSTP Liaison
10:30 International Working Group
10:55 Earth Observation Task Group
11:20 Discussion of the SDR Grand Challenges
11:55 Close and Next Actions

Handouts

- Agenda
- April Meeting Minutes
- International Working Group Notes and Materials
- Earth Observation Task Group Notes and Materials
- Grand Challenges Task Force Notes and Materials
- SDR Member Contact List
- National Academies Disasters Roundtable Announcement
- Information on Mega-Quakes
- *Geotimes*, newsmagazine of the earth sciences

I. Call to Order

SDR Vice-Chair for Science John Filson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

Members approved the 1 April 2004 meeting minutes.

III. Summary of Discussion

A. Report from the Vice-Chair

John Filson outlined the purpose of the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction (SDR) and highlighted recent Subcommittee accomplishments. The Subcommittee is an element of the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), a Cabinet-level council through which the President coordinates science and technology across the Federal government. The President chairs the NSTC, and membership consists of the Vice President, the Director of OSTP, Cabinet secretaries, agency heads with significant science and technology responsibilities, and other White House officials. The SDR is a subcommittee of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources (CENR) under the NSTC. Chartered in 1988, the SDR is charged with facilitating and promoting disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. The SDR addresses all types of natural and technological hazards, whether domestic or foreign in origin. To accomplish this mission, the SDR provides a forum for government leaders to leverage expertise, inform policy makers, promote technology applications, coordinate various activities, and promote excellence in research.

Dr. Filson also noted the success of the SDR-led Public Private Partnership 2000 and the value of “Reducing Disaster Vulnerability through Science and Technology,” an interim report published in July 2003. The SDR is now working on three major projects: (1) The coordination of the U.S. science and technology contributions to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (<http://www.unisdr.org/>); (2) The creation of the disaster reduction chapter within the U.S. National Implementation Plan for the Group on Earth Observations (<http://earthobservations.org/default.asp>); and (3) The establishment of a coordinated, strategic, national framework for science and technology research and application development for disaster reduction.

Actions:

- Members will note that the July SDR meeting will be held 1 July rather than 8 July.
- Members will volunteer for various SDR Working Groups by contacting the co-chairs (see contact information in Section VI below).

B. Report from the NSTC Liaison

NSTC liaison Gene Whitney welcomed the newly-appointed members, acknowledging each for participating in this important endeavor. Dr. Whitney also reminded members that all representatives are designated by the head of their agency and thus have agency permission to serve fully on the Subcommittee. He noted that the Subcommittee does not concern itself with individual agency budgets or missions, and that the purpose of the group is to work at a very high level and across the government to identify long-term science and technology needs.

Dr. Filson reminded members that the SDR contributed material earlier this year to the Marburger-Bolten FY2007 Interagency Research and Development Priorities memorandum and asked about the status of that memorandum. Gene Whitney acknowledged the Subcommittee’s contributions – and the subsequent communications with the CENR co-chairs – and predicted that the memorandum will be complete within the next months.

Action: The Secretariat will redistribute copies of the FY2006 Interagency Research and Development Priorities memorandum.

C. International Working Group

Co-Chair Larry Roeder reported on the recent activities of the International Working Group, especially the Working Group's draft document entitled, "The Potential Impact of Export, Travel and Transaction Restrictions on Disaster Reduction Research." The document, drafted by Larry Roeder and edited by the Working Group members, is the result of a Working Group meeting with Elizabeth Farrow, a representative from the Treasury Office of Foreign Asset Control. The draft document will be edited in May and cleared by SDR members in the June SDR meeting. Once final, the document will be posted to the SDR web site.

John Babb asked about including references to food and agriculture imports in this document, noting that malice typically is not present, but that there definitely is an issue here. Bob Feden mentioned the National Science Foundation committee on infectious disease which also deals with this issue and Peter Morris added information on the State Department's *ad hoc* working level committee established to manage U.S. Government response. Gene Whitney acknowledged each of these contributions and clarified the Subcommittee's role in this way: If the topic falls solely within the purview of a single agency, then this group will not deal with it very extensively. If it involves several agencies, the Subcommittee can consider the issue. However, members must clarify the boundaries while bearing in mind the social science and economic implications. He agreed that the issue is worth discussing in greater detail and all agreed that a briefing from Admiral Babb would be very useful.

Mr. Roeder also reported on international preparations for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (18-22 January 2005, Kobe, Japan). Several concerns surround this event, among them the \$1.5M (U.S.) difference in cost estimates held by the U.N. organizers and the Japanese hosts; and the lack of coherence around the agenda items. Mr. Roeder announced the success of GDIN 2004, an annual conference of the Global Disaster Information Network (GDIN), which was attended this year by representatives from 54 nations as well as participants from the Native American community.

The International Working Group is organizing a special meeting of the SDR for which Dan Dubno, senior technologist for CBS News, will be the featured speaker. The meeting, tentatively scheduled for 9 June, will address two topics:

- (1) The role of the fourth estate in disaster management reporting; and,
- (2) Translating data on ongoing disasters for presentation on CBS News.

Actions:

- Members will review the export controls document and will provide comments by Thursday, 13 May 2004. Once comments are complete, Larry Roeder will clear the document through the Office of Economic Sanctions Policy. SDR members will review the document again before the June meeting and will offer final approval in the June SDR meeting.
- Members interested in the participating in the International Working Group will attend the next meeting.
- The Secretariat will arrange a briefing by Admiral Babb.
- The Biological / Ecological hazard team leaders will consider adding Dr. Jim Kavatch, chair of the Interagency Working Group on infectious disease; and John Babb, the newly-appointed representative from the Office of Public Health Services. The hazard team leaders also will consider adding a representative from the NSTC Human Health and the Environment committee.

- The Secretariat will distribute a copy of the document entitled “Biodefense for the 21st Century” published April 2004.
- Gene Whitney will clear the meeting with Dan Dubno through the White House press office.
- Members will confirm availability for a Special Meeting of the SDR with guest Dan Dubno (CBS News): (1) Role of the fourth estate in reporting on disaster management; and (2) Translates data on ongoing disasters for presentation on CBS News. The preferred date is 9 June 2004 at 10 a.m. ET in the White House Conference Center, but 27 May, 28 May, and 10 June also are possibilities.

D. Earth Observation Task Group (EOTG)

Chair Rosalind Helz provided an overview of the accomplishments of the Earth Observation Task Group and briefly described the various documents, timelines, and inputs needed in order to contribute a chapter to the U.S. National Implementation Plan. The next thirty days are critical for this project and anyone interested in making inputs or changes should participate. Dr. Filson reminded members that the Subcommittee on Disaster Reduction is the only CENR subcommittee with complete, submitted contributions to the U.S. National Plan. Moreover, the Interagency Working Group on Earth Observations (IWGEO) task group leaders have distributed the EOTG’s work nationally and internationally.

Dr. Helz highlighted the accomplishments of the Task Group to date and observed that the draft disaster reduction chapter addresses the following areas:

- Eleven types of hazards/disasters are referenced;
- Users and user needs are identified and specified, by hazard;
- Known observing systems are identified (ground-based, airborne, satellite), by hazard;
- Commonalities and gaps are identified (cross-walk tables); and,
- Summary of potential recommendations/solutions.

She also noted the need to carefully identify the commonalities and gaps. So far, the commonalities and gaps can be grouped as follows:

Commonalities	Gaps
Required observations cross-walk table reduces 107 required observations from individual tables to a list of 37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface-based systems (coverage, spatial resolution inadequate) • Satellite gaps – a few in present, future metsat capabilities LOTS in moderate-resolution VIS-IR imagery LOTS in synthetic aperture radar (SAR) imagery passive-microwave capacity needed • High-resolution topography always in short supply

Priscilla Nelson commented that the discussion seemed to center on fixed, deployed systems and asked about the support for active-responding or deployable systems. Dr. Helz agreed that it is important to include mention of those systems in the document and requested a paragraph on the subject from Dr. Nelson.

Raufaste agreed, noting that these various efforts highlight the opportunity to coalesce various initiatives into one Presidential initiative.

Gene Whitney reminded members that the Subcommittee's job is to produce a short, focused policy document. The real challenge is to gather detailed information from each of these experts and then combine and categorize until we have identified the most important disaster needs for the Nation and the research and developments needs that go with them. Members agreed that a grand challenges offsite is very important and that it should occur on 18 June 2004. Priscilla Nelson concluded the discussion by reminding members that this sort of ten-year vision requires high-level thinking and participation from all agencies.

Actions:

- Members will indicate availability for the one-day Grand Challenges offsite on 18 June by replying to the Secretariat (dori@grs-solutions.com or 703-560-7448) no later than Friday, 14 May.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:55 p.m. ET.

V. Agenda Items and Other Communications with the Subcommittee

Please send proposed agenda items and any other items intended for distribution to the full Subcommittee to Doris Akerman (dori@grs-solutions.com) by 27 May 2004.

VI. Contact Information

SDR Leadership

Helen Wood, Chair, 202-482-6120, helen.wood@noaa.gov

John Filson, Vice-Chair for Science, 703-648-6715, jfilson@usgs.gov

Margaret Lawless, Vice -Chair for Policy, 202-646-3027, margaret.lawless@dhs.gov

International Working Group

Larry Roeder, Jr., Co-Chair, 202-647-5070, roederla@state.gov

Fernando Echavarría, Co-Chair, 202-663-2395, echavarriafr@state.gov

Larry Weber, Co-Chair, 703-292-7240, lweber@nsf.gov

Remote Sensing Applications Working Group

Rosalind Helz, Co-Chair, 703-648-6086, rhelz@usgs.gov

Steve Ambrose, Co-Chair, 202-358-0851, sambrose@hq.nasa.gov

Earth Observation Task Group

Rosalind Helz, Chair, 703-648-6086, rhelz@usgs.gov

Grand Challenges Task Group

Priscilla Nelson, Co-Chair, 703-292-7018, pnelson@nsf.gov

Noel Raufaste, Co-Chair, 301-975-6062, noel.raufaste@nist.gov

Secretariat

Doris Akerman, 703-560-7448, dori@grs-solutions.com

VII. Future Meetings

The SDR meets on the first or second Thursday of every month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. ET in the Eisenhower Room of the White House Conference Center:

2004

July 1, 2004 (Note: Schedule change from July 8 to July 1.)

August 5, 2005

September 9, 2004

October 7, 2004

November 4, 2004

December 2, 2004

VIII. Summary of Actions

Topic of Discussion	Action	Lead	By When
III.A. Report from the Vice-Chair for Science	Members will note that the July SDR meeting will be held 1 July rather than 8 July.	Members	3 June 2004 10 a.m. ET
III.A. Report from the Vice-Chair for Science	Members will volunteer for various SDR Working Groups by contacting the co-chairs: International Working Group Larry Roeder, Jr., Co-Chair, 202-647-5070, roederla@state.gov Fernando Echavarria, Co-Chair, 202-663-2395, echavarriafr@state.gov Larry Weber, Co-Chair, 703-292-7240, lweber@nsf.gov Earth Observation Task Group Rosalind Helz, Chair, 703-648-6086, rhelz@usgs.gov Grand Challenges Task Group Priscilla Nelson, Co-Chair, 703-292-7018, pnelson@nsf.gov Noel Raufaste, Co-Chair, 301-975-6062, noel.raufaste@nist.gov	Members	21 May 2004 5 p.m. ET
III.C. International Working Group	Members will confirm availability for a Special Meeting of the SDR with guest Dan Dubno (CBS News): (1) Role of the fourth estate in reporting on disaster management; and (2) Translating data on ongoing disasters for presentation on CBS News. The preferred date is 9 June 2004 at 10 a.m. ET in the White House Conference Center. Additional dates include 27 May, 28 May, and 10 June.	Members	14 May 2004 5 p.m. ET
III.C. International Working Group	Members will review the International Working Group's export controls document and provide comments to the Secretariat: dori@grs-solutions.com or 703-560-7448.	Members	14 May 2004 5 p.m. ET
III.C. International Working Group	The Secretariat will arrange a briefing by Admiral Babb.	Secretariat	3 June 2004 10 a.m. ET
III.C. International Working Group	The Biological / Ecological hazard team leaders will consider adding Dr. Jim Kavatch, chair of the Interagency Working Group held by the National Science Foundation; and John Babb, the newly-appointed representative from	Josephine Malilay and Nathalie Valette-Silver	3 June 2004 10 a.m. ET

Topic of Discussion	Action	Lead	By When
	the Office of Public Health Services. The hazard team leaders also will consider adding a representative from the Human Health and the Environment committee.		
III.C. International Working Group	The Secretariat will distribute a copy of the document entitled "Biodefense for the 21st Century" published April 2004.	Secretariat	14 May 2004 5 p.m. ET
III.C. International Working Group	Gene Whitney will clear the Dan Dubno meeting with the White House press office.	Gene Whitney	14 May 2004 5 p.m. ET
III.D. Earth Observation Task Group	Secretariat will distribute the link to the GEOTimes article entitled "SAR: A Versatile New Tool for Earth Science" (http://www.geotimes.org/nov03/feature_SAR.html).	Secretariat	14 May 2004 5 p.m. ET
III.D. Earth Observation Task Group	Priscilla Nelson will write a paragraph on the need for active-responding or deployable systems.	Priscilla Nelson	21 May 2004 5 p.m. ET
III.D. Earth Observation Task Group	Secretariat will combine all hazard tables into one Word document and redistribute to members.	Secretariat	14 May 2004 5 p.m. ET
III.D. Earth Observation Task Group	Members will review the IWGEO Implementation Plan Chapter and send comments to Dr. Helz (rhelz@usgs.gov or 703-648-6086) by Monday, 10 May at 5 p.m.	Members	10 May 2004 5 p.m. ET
III.D. Earth Observation Task Group	Members will review the IWGEO Implementation Plan Chapter and Earth Observation Task Group tables (attached) and send comments to Rosalind Helz: rhelz@usgs.gov or 703-648-6086.	Members	14 May 2004 5 p.m. ET
III.E. Grand Challenges	Members will indicate availability for the one-day Grand Challenges offsite on 18 June by replying to the Secretariat (dori@grs-solutions.com or 703-560-7448).	Members	14 May 2004 5 p.m. ET
III.E. Grand Challenges	Members will review the Grand Challenges materials distributed in the meeting and will volunteer for the various hazard teams by contacting the Grand Challenges co-chairs.	Members	21 May 2004 5 p.m. ET